REJUVENATED ADDISON CREATES NEW BAND
Publication date: 12/9/1994 Page: 38 Section: FRIDAYEdition: FINAL / WEST
Byline: MICHAEL NORMAN PLAIN DEALER MUSIC CRITIC
LEAD:
Mark Addison had it made as a big fish in Cleveland's small rock 'n' roll pond.
His group, the Generators - with Neon Don Buchanan, Eva Dilcue, Jim Lee and Stutz Bearcat - was one of the city's most promising and popular rock bands in the late 1970s and early '80s.
When the Generators broke up in 1982, Addison went on to form the popular rock group Nation of One.
REST:
He made a good living playing his own music, got great press and could book himself into just about any club in Northeast Ohio. The perks were nice, too. He could go to just about any rock show in town for free. He had lots of friends, a great support system.
But in 1990, he gave it all up and moved to Los Angeles to "reinvent" himself and his music.
"It's very seductive being successful in a midwestern market," said Addison in a recent telephone interview from Santa Monica, Calif., where his new band, the Borrowers is currently recording a demo album as part of a joint publishing deal with Crossfire Entertainment and Almo-Irving/Rondor Music.
"You think you are on top of the world when you are in a band that's doing well in somewhere like Cleveland. It was very hard for me to break away, to say, `This is as far as as I can take this here.' I knew L.A. would be a struggle. But I finally did it, and I'm very glad that I did.'
As it turned out, leaving Cleveland was the best move Addison ever made. A talented composer and musician, Addison fit in immediately in L.A.'s thriving, culturally diverse music scene. The change of scenary rejuvenated him creatively, giving his music added richness and lyrical maturity.
The Borrowers are a stunning four-piece acoustic folk outfit that mixes Addison's beautifully melodic songs with rock attitude and eclectic instrumentation. The lineup includes Addison on lead guitar and vocals, Josef Zimmerman on upright bass, Nina Singh on drums and Joshua Segal on violin, mandolin, bass clarinet, flute, digeridu and balalaika.
The group, which performs tomorrow at Peabody's Cafe in Cleveland Heights, has grown in the past two years from a "garage-folk-rock band" into one of Los Angeles' premier coffeehouse acts.
The group was named California's "top unsigned band" at the 1993 Rhino Records Troubadors of Folk Festival and signed its Crossfire deal after a successful showcase at this year's South by Southwest Music & Media Conference in Austin, Tex.
Crossfire is the Nashville-based publishing arm of Vector Management/Side One Management. The company publishes such artists as the Crash Test Dummies, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Lisa Germano and manages Los Lobos, Lyle Lovett and Roseanne Cash among others. Rondor Music is a Los Angeles-based publishing company run by Lance Freed, son of legendary Cleveland deejay Alan Freed.
The Borrowers have been in the studio for the past several months working on new material. Addison says they have about 30 new songs, some of which will be included on a demo tape that Crossfire will shop to major record labels next spring.
"The whole idea is to get the band a label and get the career going," says Addison. "But I hate talking about things like that. One of the biggest mistakes I made in Cleveland was being too career conscious. I was always trying to do things that I thought would get me signed.

"Today, I just do what comes naturally. I do exactly what I want to do and if people like it, great. If they don't, that's OK, too."

Born in London, Addison moved to the United States at age 6 when his classically trained father, Anthony, took a job with the Goldovsky Opera Theater in New York. The family moved to Cleveland three years later, when his father was hired as director of the Cleveland Opera Theater (now Lyric Opera Cleveland) at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Anthony Addison was a fixture at the institute for 17 years.

Young Addison grew up in Cleveland Heights, attending Cleveland Heights High School. He got his musical start after high school, playing local clubs as an acoustic folk singer-songwriter-gu-itarist.

He switched to rock 'n' roll after a stint with local rocker Willima C. "Buzz" Linhart's touring band in the 1970s. That touring band became the Generators, which ruled the local rock roost for much of the late '70s and early '80s.

"We certainly got some notoriety around the Northeast Ohio area," says Addison. "But the band had too many leaders. We had at least two or three musical directions present in the band, and after while those weren't reconciled anymore."

Addison stayed active in the Cleveland music scene after the breakup, forming Nation of One and various other groups during the 1980s. But everywhere he went, people wanted him to recreate the Generators. He started to feel trapped in Cleveland.

"I just had all that baggage to deal with," he said. "If I was going to start over again, I figured it might be better just to get out of Cleveland."

Addison says he felt at home from the start in Los Angeles. "I met some people that I really dug, almost immediately," he said. "They had a healthy attitude about working together and trying things. I ended up being in a lot of bands all at once - experimental pickup things playing anywhere from coffeehouses to the more showy clubs."

The Borrowers were an outgrowth of one of those experiments. The core of the present lineup came together two years ago. Singh joined about four months ago after original drummer Shawn Lee departed for England.

"There's no concept for the band, really," says Addison. The only concept is to not follow any rules and to do exactly what comes out of our sessions. That can lead to a variety of results.

"Joe and Josh are both classically trained. And I have some of that influence, too, because of my father. So we're comfortable playing string quartetish stuff or punkish rock. You put all that stuff togther and that's the different influences we draw on when we play."

The Peabody's Cafe gig tomorrow will be the Borrowers' third show in Cleveland this week. The band played last night at Case Western Reserve University. They also performed Thursday at Peabody's DownUnder as part of a cast-call party for an upcoming movie, "One Night at a Time."

The independent film, written by Addison friend and former Clevelander Bill Welter, is a comedy about a vampire in recovery. Addison is writing the movie's music. Production is scheduled to begin in Cleveland sometime next summer, Addison said.

For your information

The Borrowers perform at 10 p.m. tomorrow at Peabody's Cafe, 2140 S. Taylor Rd., Cleveland Heights. Tickets, $5, at the door.

PHOTO: NO CREDIT The Borrowers are a four-piece